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Social development, including questions relating to the world social situation and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the family

World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth

Note by the Secretary-General

1. In its resolution 1997/55, entitled "Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, including a World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth", the Economic and Social Council welcomed the offer of the Government of Portugal to host the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, in cooperation with the United Nations, as well as its support for the holding of the third session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System. The Council also recommended that the report of the Conference be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session through the Commission for Social Development.
2. In its resolution 52/83, the General Assembly welcomed the initiative of the Government of Portugal to host the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth and requested the Secretary-General to make the report of the Conference available to all Member States.
3. The Conference was held at Lisbon from 8 to 12 August 1998. It adopted the Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes, among other resolutions. The Declaration has been circulated as annex I to document A/53/378. The complete report of the Conference is available under the symbol WCMRY/1998/28 and, pursuant to the requests of the Assembly and the Council, will be made available to the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-seventh session and the Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.





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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-fourth session
COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE WHOLE
QUESTION OF PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS
IN ALL THEIR ASPECTS

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-fourth year

ENHANCEMENT OF AFRICAN PEACEKEEPING CAPACITY

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 89 of its report of 28 June 1997 (A/52/209), the Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations recommended that the United Nations give particular attention to strengthening the institutional capacity of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), to organizing training programmes for military personnel of African countries and to mobilizing assistance, in particular logistical and financial support to African peacekeeping capacity and to the activities of OAU in conflict prevention, management and resolution. It requested me to report to the General Assembly on measures taken to this end. In paragraph 111 of its report of 21 May 1998 (A/53/127), the Special Committee reaffirmed these recommendations, and reiterated its interest in receiving a report in this regard.

2. The present report is submitted in response to these requests.

II. DEVELOPMENT OF GENERAL PRINCIPLES GUIDING THE
ENHANCEMENT OF AFRICAN PEACEKEEPING CAPACITY

3. Notwithstanding its inherent difficulties, peacekeeping remains a vital United Nations instrument in assisting African States to resolve conflicts with the help of the international community and to create the conditions for peaceful development. The Organization of African Unity and subregional African organizations are playing an increasingly important role in the management of conflicts on the continent and in contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security. The experience gained so far clearly shows

that the conduct of meaningful peacekeeping activities is contingent upon a genuine desire on the part of conflicting parties to implement peace agreements and move towards reconciliation. At the same time, while regional and subregional commitment to peaceful solutions is essential, the sustained support of the international community can contribute significantly to the success of Africa's efforts to deal with conflicts on the continent.

4. My predecessor's report of 1 November 1995 on improving preparedness for conflict prevention and peacekeeping in Africa (A/50/711-S/1995/911) outlined a broad strategy in this regard. The international community's focus on this issue intensified following the Security Council's meeting on 25 September 1997, at the level of Foreign Ministers, to consider the need for a concerted effort to promote peace and security in Africa. Pursuant to a request made at that meeting, I presented on 13 April 1998 a report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa (A/52/871-S/1998/318), in which I outlined certain broad challenges, together with fundamental principles that should guide efforts to address them.

5. In my report, I noted, in particular, the importance of cooperation with regional and subregional organizations and of support for their initiatives. In recent years, there has been a rapid development within Africa of mechanisms to address conflict. These include ongoing efforts by OAU to strengthen its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, whose establishment in 1993 marked an important step towards enhancing African capacity in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping. Other significant developments include the increasing institutionalization of the peacekeeping capacity of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), which is working towards the development of a mechanism for prevention, management and resolution of conflict, in order to enhance its ability to contribute to the promotion of stability within the region. There have also been further efforts by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to build a regional peacekeeping capacity. Important regional and subregional peacemaking and peacekeeping initiatives have taken shape in response to the situations in Burundi, the Central African Republic, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Guinea-Bissau and Liberia, among others, and the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea.

6. Increased cooperation with regional organizations has played a crucial role in the international community's efforts to promote peace in a number of situations in Africa. The reinforcement of the capacity of African countries to participate in peacekeeping missions remains a key priority, whether those operations take place in the framework of a United Nations peacekeeping mission or in one authorized by the Security Council, but conducted by a regional organization or group of States. My report of 13 April 1998 (A/52/871-S/1998/318) reaffirmed the validity of the proposals contained in the report of 1 November 1995 (A/50/711-S/1995/911) concerning practical steps that can be taken with respect to training assistance, joint peacekeeping exercises, greater African participation in the United Nations standby arrangements, partnerships between countries whose contingents require equipment and donors that are able to assist, and closer cooperation between the United Nations and OAU.

7. However, efforts to enhance African capacity should not relieve the international community of its collective obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, which confers on the Security Council primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Measures aimed at helping Africa should not become a justification for reduced engagement in the continent by the international community. Support by non-African States for African peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts, including the provision of financial and other resources, is likely to continue to prove essential in the foreseeable future. In recent conflicts in Africa, we have also seen abundant evidence of how perceptions of political or historical associations may complicate regional efforts to resolve a conflict, so that direct international involvement, including through deployment of a peacekeeping operation, may be indispensable if peace is to be preserved. In this regard, I welcomed the international community's demonstration of its readiness to act through the deployment of two new operations in 1998, in the Central African Republic and in Sierra Leone, both of which supported regional efforts.

8. Following the release of my report (A/52/871-S/1998/318), the General Assembly and the Security Council undertook an in-depth examination of its recommendations.

9. The General Assembly held a wide-ranging debate on my report under agenda item 164. Following that debate, the General Assembly, at its 81st plenary meeting, on 7 December 1998, adopted resolution 53/92, in which, inter alia, it urged all States to assist in strengthening Africa's capacity to participate in all aspects of peacekeeping operations, in particular through increased cooperation between the United Nations and OAU and between the United Nations and subregional organizations. The Assembly also called for the establishment of an open-ended ad hoc working group to monitor implementation of the recommendations of the report.

10. The Security Council also formed a working group, which has considered the recommendations related to peace and security contained in my report. This process has generated important statements of commitment by Member States, as well as valuable reflections upon a number of difficult questions. These included a presidential statement of 16 September 1998 on strengthening African peacekeeping capacity (S/PRST/1998/28); resolution 1196 (1998) of 16 September 1998 on strengthening the effectiveness of arms sanctions regimes imposed by the Security Council; resolution 1197 (1998) of 18 September 1998 on support for regional and subregional initiatives; resolution 1208 (1998) of 19 November 1998 on the provision of security to refugees and maintaining the civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements; resolution 1209 (1998) of 19 November 1998 on the problem of illicit arms flows to and in Africa; and a presidential statement of 13 November 1998 on monitoring activities authorized by the Security Council (S/PRST/1998/35).

11. On 24 September 1998, the Security Council held a second ministerial-level meeting to consider the recommendations contained in my report of 13 April 1998. In the presidential statement following the meeting (S/PRST/1998/29), the Security Council, inter alia, urged all States and relevant bodies to provide financial and technical support to strengthen African regional and subregional arrangements for conflict prevention, the maintenance of peace and security and

dispute settlement, and called for an enhanced partnership between the United Nations and African regional and subregional organizations.

III. CURRENT EFFORTS TO ENHANCE AFRICAN PEACEKEEPING CAPACITY

12. In recent years, we have seen a considerable rise in the number of initiatives undertaken to support the enhancement of African peacekeeping capacity. I would like to commend those Member States who have provided key assistance, which can help address African peacekeeping needs.

13. The Secretariat has sought to help in the coordination of these bilateral efforts and has also taken various initiatives of its own to enhance African peacekeeping capabilities. An account of the current status of these efforts is provided below.

A. Cooperation with OAU and subregional organizations

14. The United Nations continues to work closely with regional and subregional organizations in the context of specific peacekeeping and peacemaking efforts in Africa. In my report to the General Assembly (A/53/419) I underlined the importance of closer cooperation between the United Nations and OAU, noting the encouraging measures taken to strengthen their cooperation, particularly in the areas of peace and security.

15. In April 1998, the United Nations established a political liaison office with OAU in Addis Ababa. This office can facilitate the exchange of information and coordination of initiatives and efforts between the two organizations. In addition, the United Nations has been working closely with regional and subregional organizations in their effort to address specific conflicts, including those between Ethiopia and Eritrea and in Guinea-Bissau and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

16. The Secretariat has continued to collaborate with OAU to strengthen the latter's capacity to address conflict. In 1997, the Chief of the Situation Centre of the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations travelled to Addis Ababa to assist in strengthening the management of the OAU Situation Room. In May 1998, there was a high-level meeting between the United Nations and OAU secretariats to further develop cooperation and to establish focal points for future discussion. In December 1998, the Chief of the Policy and Analysis Unit of the Department visited Addis Ababa to discuss with OAU representatives ways of assisting the enhancement of African peacekeeping capacity.

17. Within the limits of available resources, the Secretariat is prepared to draw upon its pool of current and former staff members, in particular those from African States, in order to facilitate development of the necessary expertise for creation of the OAU Situation Room. Discussions have already begun with OAU in order to arrange a short-term secondment of current or previous personnel of the Department's Situation Centre to the OAU Conflict Management Centre.

18. At the same time, OAU could send some of its staff members to United Nations Headquarters in New York for familiarization with its methods of operation. In this regard, I would like to recall that in the past, funding was made available by Member States to allow African military officers to participate in such exchanges. The development of such programmes could be of significant value to OAU at this juncture and could also help strengthen ongoing links between our two organizations.

19. In the context of its follow-up to my report, the Security Council urged me to consider the possibility of appointing liaison officers to peacekeeping operations of OAU and of subregional organizations in Africa which the Security Council authorizes (see resolution 1197 (1998)). It also expressed readiness to consider the deployment of liaison officers at the headquarters of those organizations (see S/PRST/1998/35). The Secretariat stands ready to deploy such officers, subject to the allocation of the necessary resources.

B. Ongoing capacity-building efforts

1. United Nations standby arrangements

20. The United Nations standby arrangements system has proved to be a useful tool to coordinate needs and resources and can facilitate the establishment of partnerships between Member States that make troops available and countries that are in a position to provide equipment and other support. Through the system, the United Nations addresses issues relating to requirements (troops, equipment, services and so forth) and response time/level of readiness, while helping to build training capacity based on national and regional needs.

21. Over the past 12 months, the Secretariat has focused on enhancing awareness among African States of the functions of the standby arrangements system, and of the potential benefits of participation. A briefing team on standby arrangements visited Botswana, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe in June 1998. Over the past year, individual briefings have been given to 18 permanent missions of African Member States; this useful practice will continue, subject to the availability of the necessary resources.

22. Important progress has been made as a result of these efforts. Ten African Member States joined the standby arrangements system in 1998. One African State signed a formal memorandum of understanding with the United Nations during the year. However, as of December 1998, only 22 of the 52 African Member States were participating in the standby arrangements system.

23. Broader African participation within the standby arrangements system is needed in order to strengthen the United Nations capacity to deploy peacekeeping operations within the continent and beyond. It also represents an important means to increase information flow among States, and to promote long-term development of African peacekeeping capacity. In this context, the Secretariat is currently reviewing the possibility of dispatching a standby arrangements team to Africa for further briefings and discussions in the course of the year.

2. Training

24. Recognizing the crucial importance of stronger partnership between African and non-African countries, the Secretariat, in close cooperation with OAU, has convened three major meetings over the past 12 months, devoted to the enhancement of African peacekeeping capacity.

25. On 5 December 1997, the Secretariat convened an initial meeting in which 59 Member States and OAU participated in a first attempt to exchange views and to develop a cohesive and coherent framework for new initiatives. On 26 May 1998, the Secretariat convened a follow-up African Peacekeeping Training Strategy Session, which was attended by 64 delegations, including 27 African countries and OAU. Subsequently, in July 1998, the Secretariat circulated for comment to all Member States a three-phased training strategy, with short-, medium- and long-term goals.

26. I believe the two meetings brought several major benefits:

- They highlighted the importance of certain principles - transparency, legitimacy and partnership - for enhancing African peacekeeping capacity;
- They provided a better understanding of the training resources available through the United Nations and bilateral arrangements;
- They also served as a forum for information-sharing and the development of a practical approach for future activities to enhance the training capacity of African States.

27. On 21 January 1999, the Secretariat convened a third meeting at United Nations Headquarters. Delegations from 51 Member States, including 27 African countries, as well as OAU, attended the session. Participants reaffirmed their shared view that Africa's peacekeeping capacity should and could be enhanced through various forms of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. To this end, they broadly approved the training strategy and the arrangements for information exchange proposed by the United Nations, and endorsed, in principle, the establishment of a working group composed of African and non-African States directly involved in training assistance. While the terms of reference and operational guidelines for such a working group are not yet formally agreed upon, its establishment is considered to be an important practical step forward in enhancing African peacekeeping capacity. In this context, the meeting agreed to explore the possibility of convening one of its future meetings at OAU headquarters. The United Nations intends to vigorously pursue the implementation of the approved tasks for the working group and to further develop the Secretariat's cooperation with OAU, subregional organizations and the donor community in strengthening African peacekeeping capacity.

28. The Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in close coordination with OAU, has undertaken to serve as the focal point for the collection and dissemination of information on African capacity for peacekeeping. Some information has already been collected as a result, and has allowed the Department to begin the preparation of a database that will be available to all Member States. The

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Secretariat welcomes information provided by Member States to date, and encourages communication of further relevant data, all of which will be made widely available through posting on the relevant Web site of the Internet. The provision of scholarships to facilitate the participation of African officers in such programmes could enhance the effectiveness of this effort.

29. The conducting of United Nations training assistance team (UNTAT) and train-the-trainers programmes, as well as support for major peacekeeping exercises, is vital to fulfilling the broad strategy objectives of developing regional peacekeeping capacities and harmonizing training standards among States.

30. Over the past two years, United Nations training activity relating to the enhancement of Africa's peacekeeping capacity has included an UNTAT seminar in Ghana in June 1997, a peacekeeping mission management seminar in Zambia in February 1998, a training assistance visit to Swaziland in March 1998 and a logistics training course in Kenya in June 1998. United Nations training staff also participated in large-scale multinational exercises in Zimbabwe in April 1997 and in Senegal in February 1998. African officers likewise took part in the United Nations train-the-trainer courses in Italy and in an UNTAT seminar in Singapore. The Secretariat is currently planning for seminars that would be held in Nigeria and Zimbabwe during 1999.

31. In view of the increased role of police in peacekeeping operations, recent training and capacity-building activity has included initiatives to strengthen African capacity within in this specific area.

32. In 1997 and 1998, United Nations Civilian Police (UNCIVPOL) selection assistance teams travelled at the invitation of Egypt, Ghana and Senegal to conduct testing of police officers nominated for deployment to United Nations peacekeeping missions, and to advise police authorities in those countries on United Nations predeployment training curricula. In February 1998, the United Nations Civilian Police Adviser addressed a seminar in Durban, South Africa, which was attended by senior police representatives from the SADC region. The Secretariat participated in a two-week regional course for police officers from SADC countries held in Pretoria, South Africa, in November 1998. It is also planning a course in Africa for police trainers from the 18 African countries currently contributing police to peacekeeping operations, for which it is seeking funding and training assistance from Member States.

3. Logistical and financial support

33. Clearly, a major problem facing efficient deployment of African peacekeeping operations has been the availability of logistical capacity. This was identified as a key issue in the Secretariat's previous report on enhancing African peacekeeping capacity. The importance of this issue was also emphasized in the statement made by the President of the Security Council on 16 September 1998 (S/PRST/1998/28), in which the Secretary-General was requested to study ways to improve the availability of logistics support for peacekeeping efforts in Africa.

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34. Although logistics experts from the United Nations Secretariat have participated in training efforts in Africa, the current capability of the Secretariat is not sufficient to tackle a problem of this scale. Effective measures would need sustained and coordinated partnerships between African and non-African States. I hope that the working group referred to in paragraph 27 above will help to address this pressing issue.

35. Despite the obvious needs, resources to support the Secretariat's efforts to enhance African peacekeeping capacity continue to be provided on a relatively small scale and on a case-by-case basis. In recognition of the fact that full implementation of the proposals in my predecessor's report would require additional financial resources, the United Nations Trust Fund for Improving Preparedness for Conflict Prevention and Peacekeeping in Africa was established to enable interested Member States to assist these efforts.

36. It would be unrealistic to expect the Trust Fund to provide all of the funding necessary for training activities or substitute for bilateral or multilateral programmes. However, it can prove to be a useful tool, and can act effectively as seed money, particularly in combination with additional bilateral and multilateral contributions by Member States. Recently, Trust Fund resources have been used to help support the participation of United Nations experts in the training activities in Ghana and Zambia, the peacekeeping logistics course in Kenya, and the efforts of the Standby Arrangements Unit to increase the participation of African States.

37. To date, the Trust Fund has received only one contribution, from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, to which I would like to express my gratitude (details are contained in the annex to the present report). I would strongly encourage Member States to consider contributing to this important Fund.

38. At the same time I would like to draw the attention of donors to the Peace Fund established by OAU as an essential component of its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. The United Nations can assist in facilitating contacts between OAU members and potential donors to foster development of African logistical capacity through contributions in kind. Close coordination between OAU and the United Nations Secretariat will be essential in this regard.

IV. OBSERVATIONS

39. At present, 22 African countries are contributing almost 2,500 troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations. I am grateful for their efforts, which show clearly that enhancement of African peacekeeping capacity can help advance the cause of peace, not only in Africa, but around the world.

40. Further progress in the enhancement of African peacekeeping capacity would only be possible with the determination of the African States themselves. In this regard, I have attempted to identify in this report some of the major developments in Africa which have brought new possibilities for action.

41. However, support from non-African Member States will continue to play a crucial role in the process. In this context, I welcome the international community's renewed focus on Africa. The intensive discussions that have taken place over the past two years have contributed to a greater political awareness of needs, brought clarification of a number of vital principles, and established a conceptual framework for action to build African peacekeeping capacity.

42. It is now essential that the political will that has been manifested during this period, including the relevant resolutions and statements of the Security Council, be translated into practical action. This will require readiness to share information and expertise; strengthening of ongoing political support, which may include support for deployment, when appropriate, of United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa; the strengthening of training for peacekeeping; and the allocation of adequate logistical and financial resources.

43. In the present report, I have described the ongoing efforts within the United Nations in support of this process. While the problems facing Africa are immense, I would like to suggest a number of additional steps through which incremental progress may be made:

- The formation of a working group composed of African and non-African States directly involved in the provision of training assistance;
- The provision of funding, including scholarships, that could allow African military officers, particularly those serving with OAU and subregional arrangements, to participate in short-term exchanges with United Nations peacekeeping staff;
- Consideration of deployment of United Nations liaison officers to regional organizations under appropriate circumstances, as suggested by the Security Council;
- Continued efforts by standby arrangements experts to promote further cooperation by African States within the United Nations standby arrangements system;
- Further use of the United Nations standby arrangements system to help match needs with available resources;
- Communication to the Secretariat by Member States of information on their peacekeeping training programmes;
- Establishment of a special peacekeeping programme for African police officers.

44. As I have indicated, many of these efforts could be supported through contributions to the United Nations Trust Fund. I am also drawing the attention of donors to the important role that can be played by the OAU Peace Fund.

45. The United Nations experience in resolving African conflicts attests to the significant role which could be played in Africa through peacekeeping. The recent setbacks that we have experienced in peacekeeping efforts in Africa and

the recent emergence of new threats to stability within the continent should not be seen as grounds for discouragement or disengagement. Rather, they should be viewed as a call for renewed cooperation by all States Members of the United Nations in favour of Africa's search for peace, development and democracy.

46. A combination of determination, perseverance and vision on the part of African leaders and commitment by the international community to support their efforts is vital for peaceful progress within Africa as well as for enhancing Africa's contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. The United Nations Secretariat stands ready to assist in making this partnership as effective and as fruitful as possible.

ANNEX

United Nations Trust Fund for Improving Preparedness
for Conflict Prevention and Peacekeeping in Africa

The United Nations Trust Fund for Improving Preparedness for Conflict Prevention and Peacekeeping in Africa was established on 8 July 1996.

United States dollars*

Revenue

Contributions - United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (July 1996)	250 745
Interest	<u>15 816</u>
Subtotal	266 561

Expenditure

Ghana UNTAT seminar	50 676
Zambia UNTAT seminar	16 823
Kenya logistics course	28 214
Standby team visit to southern Africa	<u>19 743</u>
Subtotal	115 456

<u>Estimated available</u>	151 105
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* All figures remain tentative, since not all obligations have been liquidated at the present time.



General Assembly

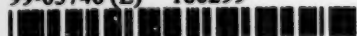
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Fifty-fourth session
General and complete disarmament

Note verbale dated 11 February 1999 from the Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Mission of South Africa to the United Nations has the honour to request that South Africa's input in pursuance of the decision (CM/Dec. 432 (LXVIII)) on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons taken at the thirty-fourth meeting of Heads of State of the Organization of African Unity (see annex) be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under the item entitled "General and complete disarmament".



Annex

South African input in pursuance of the decision (CM/Dec. 432 (LXVIII)) on the proliferation of small arms and light weapons taken at the thirty-fourth meeting of Heads of State of the Organization of African Unity

South Africa recognises the primary role of the Organization of African Unity in efforts to curtail the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects in accordance with the OAU decision CM/Dec. 432 (LXVIII). Pursuant to paragraph 4 of this decision the South African position on small arms and light weapons proliferation as well as steps taken to deal with the issue is appended below.

SOUTH AFRICAN POSITION ON SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS PROLIFERATION

While arms control has traditionally focused on conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction, the devastation wrought by the proliferation of light weapons and small arms on socio-economic development generally, and specifically in the reconstruction of post-conflict societies, can no longer be ignored.

Within countries, unimpeded access to light weapons and small arms, and the use of these, have increased the lethality of crime, violence, banditry and civil disobedience. Regionally, the demobilisation of ex-combatants, disarmament programmes and reductions of military-industrial complexes are constrained by the existence of large amounts of poorly regulated and indiscriminately used light weapons and small arms.

The diffusion of existing stocks and the import of new weapons endanger the democratic pursuits which are being consolidated and negatively influence the ability of governments to govern effectively, not only of countries in Africa but around the world.

The challenge in addressing the proliferation of small arms is to marshal the necessary human and financial resources, encourage the sharing of reliable data among national departments and regional partners, coordinate action and raise the profile of the issue to gain the support of governments, politicians and nongovernmental organisations.

Furthermore, the illicit proliferation of small arms is closely linked to other criminal activities and therefore must be addressed within the context of other initiatives aimed at reducing crime. The close link between licit and illicit weapons must also be recognised and approaches to addressing the one must relate to the other both within countries and in regional initiatives.

Therefore, South Africa believes that:

- 1 A holistic approach is necessary to address this problem.

Concurrent action must be taken at national, regional and international levels focusing both on licit and illicit small arms and light weapons; and

A regional initiative for the control of weapons proliferation in Africa is urgently needed.

Recommended course of action :

Approach :

Addressing the proliferation of light weapons and small arms in Africa must be viewed from an inclusive perspective of arms control and disarmament, post-conflict peace building, conflict prevention and socio-economic development.

Through the coordination of these approaches, a holistic national strategy should be developed that will assess and identify national priorities and determine achievable steps to be taken to contain and reduce weapons proliferation.

To reinforce national action, it is imperative that a regional approach should be formulated to address the problem of the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons that is based on regional concerns and adopts an incremental approach. This will ensure that as each region of the world develops an indigenous approach, the building blocks will be put in place to effectively deal with this issue globally.

The focus areas in all instances should be placed on illicit and licit small arms and light weapons. Thus, national and regional approaches must be developed for both short-term and long-term gains which can make an impact on illicit as well as licit arms circulation.

Practical measures for co-ordination and co-operation :
National :

National efforts should focus on enhancing legislation and regulation to prevent legal small arms from becoming illegal through criminal activity, improve, as necessary, regulation on the import, export and transfer of light weapons and small arms, and increase the control over stocks of light weapons belonging to security forces.

Steps should also be taken to reduce the number of existing weapons through voluntary methods (including programmes of collection and destruction) and increasing the capacity of the security forces to identify, seize and destroy illicit weapons.

Regional:

Regionally, an important confidence-building measure which will lead to long-term gains for regional cooperation and trust is

greater transparency by countries of their transfers of small arms and light weapons.

In affected regions, countries and regional organisations should take immediate steps to stop the inflow of small arms and light weapons through increased cooperation, harmonisation of transfer procedures, tighter border control and intelligence sharing. Attention must also be focused on the recirculation of existing stocks throughout the region and appropriate control measures devised, including increased cooperation among governments regionally, joint operations and harmonisation of priorities.

A cooperative partnership should be established between governments, international and regional organisations and the nongovernmental community to mobilise public and political support. The role of the nongovernmental community in assisting governments in achieving this support and aiding in the compilation of reliable data regarding small arms and light weapons proliferation in all its aspects should be explored fully.

Aside from this regional initiative, an international conference on light weapons and small arms should be held after 1999 to enable governments and regional organisations to share their experiences, and facilitate dialogue. The aim of the conference should be to increase cooperation and avoid duplication of initiatives to ensure that scarce resources are utilised effectively. The conference should formulate an action plan to combat this proliferation problem based upon the experiences of indigenous regional approaches in this regard. Such regional approaches will have put in place measures to effectively deal with this issue globally.

SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM OF THE PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN SOUTH AFRICA

In dealing with the scope of small arms proliferation it must be realized that the proliferation consists of two different groups, namely illegal or illicit small arms and the legal proliferation. Both contribute to the problems of proliferation.

Legal Arms

The proliferation of legal arms continues unabated in South Africa. The main cause being the high level of violent crime resulting in people purchasing arms for self-defence purposes. Statistically South Africa has one of the highest ratios of handguns in the world. Currently there are some 4,2 million arms registered in some 2,3 million persons' names. Of these 1,2 million are rifles, 0,4 million shotguns and 2,6 million handguns. Applications for licences to possess arms are still being received at an average rate of 20 000 per month.

What is most disconcerting is the fact that arms in legal

possession are being stolen or robbed at a rate of 20 000 per year. The recovery of stolen or robbed arms is less than this rate being 14 970 for 1997.

Illegal Arms

The flow of illegal arms continues into South Africa mainly across our borders with neighbouring states such as Mozambique. Although it is believed that as a source for the criminal element in South Africa this source is not as important as those arms stolen from private individuals.

STEPS TAKEN TO DEAL WITH THE SMALL ARMS PROLIFERATION PROBLEM

The South African Government has declared the combating of small arms (firearms) proliferation as a South African Police Service priority number one for 1998/99. A coherent strategy to deal with the proliferation of small arms in South Africa has been developed. The strategy represents an integral and holistic approach to introduce stricter control measures and to eventually remove the causal factors of small arms proliferation. In this regard the National Firearms Plan is being implemented which mainly deals with the problem of illegal small arms. The objective is to reduce the number of illegal small arms in circulation as well as to reduce the flow of illegal weapons into South Africa. It also concentrates efforts to ensure the lawful and proper use of licensed firearms.

The Overall Strategy has four basic aims:

1. To stop the inflow of illegal arms into South Africa.
2. To prevent arms in legal possession becoming illegal through theft and robbery.
3. To mop up the existing pool of arms in South Africa.
4. To educate South Africans concerning the possession of arms.

Under each of these four main aims there are a number of projects one of the more important ones being the legislative amendments which are aimed at tightening up the issuing of licences and ensuring that fewer losses occur from legal owners.

In addition, South Africa is committed to a policy of responsibility and accountability in the trade and transfer of all arms. South Africa has established an arms control system which makes provision for a ministerial control body, criteria, principles and guidelines to ensure the responsible transfer and trade in, amongst others, small arms and light weapons.

The South African Government has adopted a policy on the destruction of surplus small arms where appropriate. On 6 October 1997 the South African Police Service melted down 20 tons of firearms. A total of 4 504 confiscated firearms, including pistols, revolvers, rifles, shotguns and home made firearms. The commercial value of these arms is estimated to be in excess of

R2 million (approx US\$264 000). Subsequently the South African Police Service has destroyed an additional 11 tons of confiscated ammunition and 10 tons of confiscated small arms, 9 tons of obsolete/outdated ammunition and 20 tons of redundant/obsolete small arms.

The following are steps being taken by the South African Police Service (SAPS) to address the problem :

- * Tri-lateral meetings with Swaziland and Mozambique in order to exchange information and come up with joint initiatives.
- * Joint Monitoring Operations with Swaziland and Mozambique concentrating on the border posts and border areas.
- * Training / Briefing of members of Border Police / Dog Units.
- * Training of Mozambique Policemen and Parks Border Officials in order to combat the problem.
- * New Curriculum for Illegal Firearm Investigation Course.
- * Drawing up a new mandate / working procedure which is awaiting final approval.
- * Training of members to etch serial numbers of firearms.
- * Participation in the Institute for Security Studies Programmes in order to analyse the illegal firearms situation.
- * Initiatives were taken to ensure that the issuing of export permits was centralised by the Central Firearms Register.
- * Suggestions to Central Firearms Register that they adhere to the export procedures as proposed by the United Nations.

A specialized unit has been established by SAPS to address the following:

- * illegal possession of firearms and explosives;
- * illegal importing and distribution of firearms and explosives;
- * illegal domestic manufacturing of firearms and explosives;
- * illegal export of firearms and explosives;
- * illegal use of firearms and explosives;
- * dealing in firearms and explosives; and
- * origin of illegal firearms and explosive devices.

South Africa is further committed to stopping the flow of illegal small arms across its borders. South Africa has already entered into agreements with several Southern African States with a view to curb the trafficking of illegal small arms and ammunition. In this regard bi-lateral agreements have been signed between South Africa and Mozambique and between South Africa and Swaziland to address cross border crime. This agreement led to the launching of the first joint operation for the mapping and destruction of uncontrolled arms/explosives caches within Mozambique, known as Operation Rachel. Four official Rachel operations have been held within Mozambique since 1995, to locate and destroy uncontrolled arms and explosive caches in Mozambique. Huge successes have been achieved in which tons of arms and explosives have been destroyed.

Approximately 60 successful ad hoc ground level joint operations have been held between Mozambique and South Africa with the same purpose. In addition, several joint operations have been held since then at both grass roots and national level, between the three countries. This agreement also makes provision for the following:

- * Joint investigations.
- * Joint interrogation of suspects.
- * Joint exchange of information.

The cost of all these operations has been carried by the South African Government.

A new multi-lateral agreement was also signed in 1997 under the umbrella of SARPCCO, with eleven different SADC countries. This agreement is basically the same content as the bi-lateral agreements with Mozambique and Swaziland. This agreement, however, still needs ratification by some of the countries' governments.

The issuing of all export permits for commercial firearms has been centralized in a bid to verify all exports prior to dispatch.

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES BY SOUTH AFRICA

In the international fora the South African Government is insisting that equal attention should be given to the control of the proliferation of conventional weapons as is given to the disarmament debate on weapons of mass destruction.

During the 1998 session of the General Assembly of the United Nations South Africa initiated a UN resolution on the illicit trafficking in small arms, which was adopted without a vote. The objective of this resolution is to empower the UN Secretary General to undertake regional consultations on the issue of small arms proliferation.

South Africa is also cooperating with the various United Nations initiatives on small arms. In this regard and in cooperation with the UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms and the Government of Japan, the South African Government hosted a regional Workshop on Small Arms Proliferation which was held in Pretoria, South Africa, from 23 to 25 September 1996.

The objective of the Workshop was to provide the members of the UN Panel of Governmental Experts on Small Arms with additional insights and information on: the types of small arms and light weapons in the region; the causes and modes for their accumulation and transfer; and the practical measures for stemming their flow, proliferation and use. This Panel was

established by the Secretary General of the United Nations in pursuance of General Assembly Resolution 50/70B. The report of the Panel (A/52/298 of 27 August 1997) was submitted to the 52nd session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1997. Participants from the following countries were present at the Workshop: Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, as well as representatives of United Nations International Commission of Inquiry: Rwanda, United Nations Sahara-Sahel Mission, Japan, Mali, Belgium, Germany, Finland and the United States of America. The participants voiced their shared concern over the following consequences of the proliferation of small arms:

- The uncontrolled proliferation of small arms has a devastating effect on the socio-economic development and reconstruction of civil societies in Africa. Such a proliferation endangers the democratic pursuits which are being consolidated at the time in the region.
- Crime, violence and lawlessness are inextricably bound to the availability of light weapons and small arms.
- Efforts at regional demilitarization, demobilization and disarmament, which should be the result of regional peace, are severely constrained by the continuing existence and indiscriminate use of small arms and light weapons.

Participants agreed that the problem needs to be addressed in a holistic manner and dealt with concurrently at domestic, regional and international levels.

**General Assembly**

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12 February 1999
English
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Fifty-fourth session
Human rights questions

**Letter dated 12 February 1999 from the Permanent Representative of
Germany to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to bring to your attention the statement on the execution of Sean Sellers issued on 11 February 1999 by the Presidency of the European Union (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Dieter Kastrup
Permanent Representative of Germany
to the United Nations



Annex

[Original: English and French]

**Statement on the execution of Sean Sellers issued on 11 February 1999
by the Presidency of the European Union**

The European Union deeply regrets the execution of Sean Sellers on 4 February 1999 in the State of Oklahoma. Mr. Sellers was 16 at the time when the crime for which he was sentenced was committed. The United States of America had not executed a prisoner for a crime committed at that age since 1959. The European Union had carried out démarches towards the American authorities at both federal and state levels to prevent that execution.

Article 6 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights — to which the United States is a party — expressly states that the death penalty shall not be imposed for crimes committed by persons below 18 years of age.

The European Union recognizes that the United States has made a reservation to article 6 of the Covenant. Nevertheless, the Union believes that article 6 enshrines the minimum rules for the protection of the right to life and the generally accepted standards in this area. It notes that in the view of the United Nations Human Rights Committee, the reservation of the United States is incompatible with the object and purpose of the convention and should be withdrawn.

The European Union considers that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to the enhancement of human dignity and progressive development of human rights. Therefore the Union works towards universal abolition of the death penalty.

The countries of Central and Eastern Europe — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and Cyprus, associated with the European Union, and the countries of the European Free Trade Association, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with the present declaration.



General Assembly Economic and Social Council

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General Assembly
Fifty-fourth session
Social development, including
questions relating to the world social situation
and to youth, ageing, disabled persons and the
family

Economic and Social Council
Substantive session of 1999
Social and human rights questions: social
development

Letter dated 11 February 1999 from the Permanent Representative of Senegal to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I should like to inform you that the Government of Senegal proposes to host in Senegal the fourth session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System.

As you know, the Government of Senegal has always paid special attention to the problems of youth, and the Senegalese Head of State has made youth a top priority of his current term of office.

The National Youth Council of Senegal, an organization which represents all facets of Senegalese youth, played an active role at the third session of the Forum, which was held in Braga, Portugal, from 2 to 7 August 1998. It contributed a great deal to the adoption of the Braga Plan of Action for youth, which it has begun to implement at the national, regional and international levels, in cooperation and synergy with sister organizations from Africa and the rest of the world.

Holding the fourth session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System in Africa, then, would be doing a great honour to the youth of Africa and to their struggle for African development with peace.

I should therefore be grateful for any efforts you can make to bring this matter to the attention of Member States and the relevant organizations of the United Nations system, and also to circulate this letter as a document of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council, under the relevant agenda items, and to distribute it to the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-seventh session.

(Signed) Ibra Deguène Ka
Ambassador
Permanent Representative





General Assembly

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12 February 1999

Original: English

Fifty-fourth session

**Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning
of the United Nations**

Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly, by its resolution 45/254 A of 21 December 1990, decided to continue considering annually the administrative, structural and other aspects of the improvement of the efficiency of the Organization, and invited the Secretary-General to report accordingly.
2. The General Assembly may recall that the Secretary-General's programme for reform (A/51/950 and Add.1-7) covered issues related to the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations. Further follow-up actions are being implemented and reported on through a series of reports under specific agenda items, such as procurement reform, human resources management reform, the Development Account, results-based budgeting and the Revolving Credit Fund.
3. In view of the foregoing, the General Assembly may wish to discontinue the submission of the report, which is mandated in paragraph 17 of Assembly resolution 45/254 A and agree that the issues related to the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations be considered under specific agenda items.





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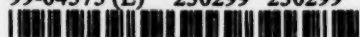
Fifty-fourth session
General and complete disarmament

**Letter dated 19 February 1999 from the Permanent Representative
of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to
the Secretary-General**

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement made on 11 February 1999 by the official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation concerning the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the text of this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under the item entitled "General and complete disarmament".

(Signed) S. Lavrov



Annex**Statement made on 11 February 1999 by the official representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation**

Intensive consultations on the adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) are continuing "in all directions". There has been some encouraging progress. In particular, we have achieved an important understanding with Ankara on the settlement of flank problems, which has met with the support of the other participants in the negotiations process.

The most important thing now is to concentrate on another key issue: ensuring strategic stability in Central Europe through arms-control mechanisms. Efforts are being made at the bilateral level in capitals and at the multilateral level through the Russian Federation/North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and at the Vienna negotiations on the adaptation of the CFE Treaty. The other day, an important meeting was held with the NATO high-level working group on the adaptation of the CFE Treaty, at which there was a comprehensive and frank exchange of views that made it possible to come up with a clear outline for a possible compromise. It is imperative to find such solutions in the coming weeks so that the accession to NATO of three new members, expected in the first half of March, does not jeopardize the viability of the CFE Treaty. We are convinced that, if the interested countries demonstrate the necessary flexibility and political determination, we shall have very good prospects for success.
